

## السياحة الدينية في الأردن: دراسة اتجاهات السكان المحليين نحو أثرها السياحي في مدينة مادبا السياحية

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(قدم للنشر في ١٤٣٢/٢/٥ هـ؛ وقبل للنشر في ١٤٣٢/٣/٢٧ هـ)

ملخص البحث. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على اتجاهات السكان المحليين نحو الأثر الإيجابي والسلبي للسياحة الدينية الناتجة عن حركة السياح داخل المدينة لأهداف دينية ومدى تأثيرها على النواحي الاقتصادية والاجتماعية والبيئية، ونظراً لعدم وجود دراسات سابقة متخصصة في هذا المجال فقد سعى الباحث إلى محاولة دراسة هذه الآثار لما تشكله من مخاطر قد تؤدي إلى تراجع السياحة الدينية لهذا المقصد بشكل كبير، وقد خلص الباحث إلى عدة نتائج وتوصيات من شأنها زيادة الإيجابيات وتقليل المخاطر من خلال دراسة توجهات السكان المحليين نحو هذا النوع من السياحة وسبل تطويره ليكونوا شركاء في عمليات التخطيط السياحي وإعداد البرامج المستقبلية، حيث اعتمد الباحث على أسلوب الاستبانة الموجه إلى السكان المحليين والتي صممت لهذه الغاية، وقد خلصت الدراسة إلى أن السياحة الدينية في مدينة مادبا لا زالت في مرحلة التطور، وأن الفرص لا زالت متاحة بشكل كبير. وبالرغم من وجود العديد من التهديدات وخاصة الاجتماعية والبيئية، فإن الدراسة توصي بضرورة زيادة الفرص وتقليل التهديدات من خلال إعداد برامج التوعية ووضع الإستراتيجيات المستقبلية التي تراعي مصلحة السكان المحليين في المستقبل من قبل أصحاب القرار والمخططين.

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As can be deduced from Table 8 above, the grand mean for all positive variables in Madaba region is 3.23. This means that residents' perceptions towards positive tourism impacts were positively moderate. As for the grand mean score for negative variables in Madaba region, it was moderate (3.02). This means that resident's perceptions towards negative tourism impacts in Madaba region was negatively moderate, indicating that residents perceived that the current level of tourism development has no effect on them.

### Conclusion

There has been an extensive research in the literature concerning the study of the impacts of continuing tourism development in host communities. An increasing body of research has related to those impacts dealing not only with the economic qualities of a community, but also with the environmental and social impacts. Many previous researchers have reported that tourism had both positive and negative impacts (Aref, Rrdzuan, and Gill, 2009; Andereck, 2000; Ap and Crompton, 1998; Crandall, 1994; Farrell and Runyan, 1991; Mathieson and Wall, 1982; Murphy, 1985; Tosun, 2002; Weaver and Lawton, 2001; Witt, 1990).

For the advancement of tourism in any geographical location, there is a need for support of the residents of the concerned area (Ap, 1992; King, Pizam and Milman, 1993). Over the past few decades, tourism has come to be viewed as the key to economic development. However, there is a possibility of negative impacts of tourism development to be more important than the economic benefits. If a host community perceives the total effects to be negative, their level of support is likely to diminish. Residents' positive perceptions towards tourism development are thus critical to sustaining the growth of community tourism business.

In this study, two main objectives were presented: first, to examine residents' perceptions towards the positive impacts of religious tourism in Madaba; and second, to examine residents' perceptions towards the negative impacts of religious tourism in Madaba.

The residents of the Madaba region under study were asked to express their opinions on both the positive and negative impacts of the tourism industry on a variety of economic, socio-cultural and environmental issues in the Madaba area. The survey showed that residents' attitudes towards positive tourism impacts were positively moderate.

As for the grand mean score for negative variables in the Madaba region, it was moderate, indicating that residents perceived that the current level of tourism development has no effects on them.

The results of this study provide basis for formulating responsible principles and guidelines that can be applied to suitable policies and measures geared towards preventing negative impacts and supporting positive ones.

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**Table 7. Residents' perceptions towards negative environmental impacts of tourism**

| Variables in Madaba        | Agree |      | Neutral |      | Disagree |      | Mean        | Std. Dev.    | Level           |
|----------------------------|-------|------|---------|------|----------|------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|
|                            | Freq. | %    | Freq.   | %    | Freq.    | %    |             |              |                 |
| Pollution                  | 90    | 37.6 | 30      | 12.9 | 117      | 49.4 | 2.84        | 0.87         | Moderate        |
| Congestion                 | 104   | 43.7 | 43      | 18.1 | 91       | 38.2 | 3.10        | 1.10         | Moderate        |
| Natural resource burdening | 69    | 29.0 | 44      | 18.7 | 126      | 52.3 | 2.70        | 1.01         | Moderate        |
| <b>Grand mean</b>          |       |      |         |      |          |      | <b>2.87</b> | <b>0.820</b> | <b>Moderate</b> |

Table 7 shows residents' perceptions towards the negative environmental impacts of tourism. Obviously, in Madaba, 49.46% of respondents did not believe against 37.6% who believed that tourism played a role in increasing pollution, with a negatively moderate mean score of 2.84. On the other hand, 43.7% of these local respondents believed against 38.2% that tourism played a role in increasing congestion in Madaba region, obtaining a negatively moderate mean score of 3.10. As can be seen from Table 7, 52.3% of respondents disagreed against 29.0% who agreed that there were negative effects on natural resources caused by tourism development in Madaba, thus coming to a negatively moderate mean score of 2.70. The grand mean for all negative environmental variables in Madaba region obtained a negatively moderate level 2.87.

From the means scores shown in Table 7 above, it was found that tourism affects negatively but moderately in increasing pollution, traffic congestions, and burdening the natural resources. For pollution, tourism requires building resorts and hotels in which chemical materials are used in its daily activities which harm the environment. The same goes for transportation which in turn causes pollution. The remaining materials from constructing new buildings could add to the pollution, and the materials

remained after the tourists who could harm the environment such as the waste and the litter, particularly, from the local tourists who use wood for cooking their food. Furthermore, the low educated people intend to harm the nature by carving their writings on trees. As for the congestions, the results showed that tourism moderately causes congestions in the areas of attractions, particularly the small areas such as Jerash during annual festivals, and the crowds caused by the vehicles used by tourists for their transportations, and in the meeting of other religions pilgrimage to Jordan, particularly, in the southern region of Jordan such as Madaba and Mu'ta. As for the burdening of the natural resources, the study found that tourism affects negatively but moderately in causing the burdening of the natural resources. This can be explained by the need to build resorts and hotels and other facilities in the areas of attractions, which comes on the expense of the natural resources such as trees, wild animals and nature. This is also attributed by the infrastructure required for these areas such as the high-ways which always comes on the expense of the green land. This also reduces the productivity of the green lands in terms of its space and due to some other problems associated with these activities such as soil erosion and trees deforestation (see Table 8).

**Table 8. Mean and standard deviation for positive and negative impacts of tourism development in Madaba (N = 238)**

| Tourism Impact         | Madaba (N = 238) |             | Overall (N = 680) |             |          |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|----------|
|                        | Mean             | Std. Dev.   | Mean              | Std. Dev.   | L        |
| Positive economic      | 3.00             | 0.72        | 3.06              | 0.81        | M        |
| Positive social        | 3.10             | 0.75        | 3.29              | 0.76        | M        |
| Positive environmental | 3.77             | 0.59        | 3.76              | 0.69        | H        |
| <b>Grand mean</b>      | <b>3.23</b>      | <b>0.58</b> | <b>3.31</b>       | <b>0.65</b> | <b>M</b> |
| Negative economic      | 3.35             | 0.64        | 3.20              | 0.63        | M        |
| Negative social        | 3.01             | 0.77        | 2.86              | 0.78        | M        |
| Negative environmental | 2.87             | 0.82        | 2.83              | 0.81        | M        |
| <b>Grand mean</b>      | <b>3.02</b>      | <b>0.61</b> | <b>2.92</b>       | <b>0.62</b> | <b>M</b> |

and this in the long run will minimize damage of the habitat and at the same time optimize information benefits to the local residents and tourists.

The development of the infrastructure in Jordan has been improved to keep pace with the increasing demand of both tourists and the locals. Many projects have been undertaken by the MOTA and municipal councils to enhance and maintain infrastructures (portable water, electricity, good roads, etc.) at or around tourist sites—as is the case in Ajloun, Madaba and Mu'ta.

However on negative side, tourism causes higher rates of pollution and congestions. This is more noticed in certain places—as in Aqaba, downtown Amman, and close to the Roman Theatre, and during certain seasons of the year, in Jerash and Mu'ta. Natural resources, though, have generally been a burden, sometimes abused by domestic tourists, by littering or by lighting fire in the forest areas. People who are not fully educated normally don't follow clean and safety norms properly and play an unpleasant role to pollute the tranquility and tangibility of the healthy environment.

### Positive impact

Four items concerning the positive environmental impacts are investigated to measure the perceptions of local people to various environmental—restoration of historical buildings, maintenance of roads and other infrastructure, public transport quality, and higher-quality hotels and restaurants. From these four items, two variables were chosen to represent the positive environmental impacts of tourism, which are restoration of historical buildings and infrastructure, as shown in Table 6.

The residents generally had a positive perception of the environmental impacts of tourism. The most positive environmental development, as seen by residents, was the restoration of historical buildings agreed upon by 92.4%, against 3.8% who disagreed, with a positively high mean score of 4.35. The finding of this study concerning the restoration of historical buildings and the conservation of natural resources is consistence with the finding of Baysan (2001). As for the infrastructure development, 67.36% agreed against

20.33% who disagreed, achieving a positively moderate mean score of 3.20. The grand mean for the positive environmental impacts in Madaba came at a positively high level (3.77). The finding of this study concerning the infrastructure and public facilities is consistent with the finding of Wall (1996). Sethna and Richmond (1978) and Pizam (1978) suggest that locals perceive tourism as having a positive impact on services by improving the standards of roads and other public facilities.

Tourism is also found to be affective in the restoration of old buildings and infrastructure. The local governments have been making efforts to keep their surroundings attractive by keeping them clean, tidy and in conformity to modernity. These efforts are motivated by the ability of these areas to attract more local and foreign tourists, which in the long run increases and generate more income into the country.

As for the development and enhancement of infrastructure, the findings in this study acknowledged that tourism has a very significant role in improving a highly positive impact on the infrastructural development of the areas under the study. In line with the above findings of this study, tourism itself depends highly on the developed infrastructures, such as hotels, high-ways, and telecommunications. It is also interesting to notice that the government of Jordan is carrying out projects that aimed to enhancing and increasing the capacity of the infrastructure, which is believed to attract the reputation of Jordan internationally as a preferable tourism destination.

### Negative impact

The six items in the local residents' questionnaire concerning the negative environmental impacts of tourism were investigated to measure the perceptions of local people to environmental issues—pollution and noise, environmental destruction, litter, water shortage, congestion, and burden on a community services. From the six items, three variables were ultimately chosen to represent the environmental negative impacts; pollution, congestion, and the burden of natural resources, as shown in Table 7.

**Table 6. Residents' perceptions towards positive environmental impacts of tourism**

| Variables in Madaba                 | Agree |      | Neutral |      | Disagree |      | Mean        | Std. Dev.   | Level       |
|-------------------------------------|-------|------|---------|------|----------|------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|                                     | Freq. | %    | Freq.   | %    | Freq.    | %    |             |             |             |
| Restoration of historical buildings | 210   | 92.4 | 9       | 3.8  | 9        | 3.8  | 4.35        | 0.73        | High        |
| Infrastructure                      | 159   | 67.3 | 29      | 12.3 | 49       | 20.3 | 3.20        | 1.40        | Moderate    |
| <b>Grand mean</b>                   |       |      |         |      |          |      | <b>3.77</b> | <b>0.58</b> | <b>High</b> |

Survey results on prostitution that can be seen from Table 5 above show that the majority of respondents (59.7%) in the region believed that tourism had a negative impact on openness to prostitution and on its spread in Jordan, while only a small minority of respondents (18.0%) disagreed about the matter. The mean score for this variable in the region collectively came at a negatively high level (3.50). The findings of this study concerning the negative influence of tourism on the spread of prostitution are consistent with the findings of Liu and Var (1986) and Haralambopoulos and Pizam (1996).

Finally, it can also be understood from Table 5 that the majority of respondents (41.73%) found no negative role to tourism on locals' morality in the sense of honesty in everyday dealings, against a minority of 37.23% who disagreed, achieving a negatively moderate mean score of 3.01. The finding of this study concerning the locals' honesty and morality is in consistence with the finding of Haralambopoulos and Pizam (1996).

From Table 5 above, the negative impact of tourism on local people do exist. This study finds out that tourism negatively affects the local people highly in alcoholism, and this can be explained by the trends of youth people to imitate the behavior of tourists whom they perceived as modern and worthy of respect. Tourism affects negatively but moderately in difficulties of life, drugs, prostitution, and morality. For the difficulties of life, this can be explained by the increase of prices that would affect the life of the people negatively, particularly; the people who are not associated with business in the tourism industry who will perceive the prices of products and services as high and cannot be offered which will add to the difficulties of their life. As for drugs, prostitution, and morality, this can be explained by imitation. The difficulties of life which are explained above can derive the local people towards drugs, prostitution, and exhibit low morality. This also can be explained by the different backgrounds of tourists who have different perspectives and different cultural and religious backgrounds who perceived these things as normal. Local residents most properly would like to imitate the tourists' behavior and this would be hinder by the Islamic background of Jordanians. This is particularly true for crime, which is associated with high punishment in Islam and the Jordan law.

### **Environmental impact**

Tourism development has both positive and negative environmental consequences. In time, though, the negative consequences become clearer, with the increasing number of tourists. Negative

environmental impacts have been reported by Mathieson and Wall (1982), Green *et al.* (1990), Clarke *et al.* (1995), Lickorish and Jenkins (1997), Brass (1996), Robinson (1999), Cooper *et al.* (1993), Van der Straaten (2000), Williams (2000), Hall and Page (2002), Holloway (2002), amongst others. The focus of such studies has mainly been on environmental impacts, such as the deterioration of natural resources, the causes and incidence of various kinds of pollution, drinking water shortages, overcrowding and the production of litter. The positive impacts reported include the enhancement of public places, the protection and upgrading of valued places such as national parks and historical sites, and improvements in infrastructure and telecommunication facilities (Mathieson and Wall, 1982; Green *et al.*, 1990; Clarke *et al.*, 1995; Robinson, 1999; Cooper *et al.*, (1993); Holloway, 2002).

In order to attract tourists in Jordan, many historical sites and buildings have been continuously restored. This is especially in Jerash, Madaba, Ajloun, Petra, Mu'ta, and many other places. For example, Qusayr Amra, which was a famous Islamic historical castle, was built in the early 8th century. This historical castle, although a small palace, is among the cherishable Islamic ruins that was a preserved model of Umayyad frescoes in the Islamic world. At the present, the Jordanian Department of Antiquities and the Institut Francais D'Archeologie du Proche-Orient (IFAPO) are working together towards the protection and preservation of this historical site with the financial support from UNESCO and the French Embassy. A landscaping project, accompanied by the restoration of the hydraulic and drainage system at the palace, is currently underway to prevent flood waters and water seeping dropping into the building.

Natural resources are very important ingredient for sustainable growth and development of tourism in Jordan. The government of Jordan needs to keep these natural resources from inexhaustible, for example, the Conservation of the Dana Wildlands and the Azraq Oasis (UNDP, 1997).

Dana is generally well known as a model of integrated conservation and development, where the protection of nature goes hand-in-hand with the improvement of the social and economic conditions of local people. Development activities include the production of unique handicrafts, natural food items, and the flourishing of eco-tourism operation. The development of the sustainable tourism in the Dana reserve is a welcomed idea. This is because its development will encourage the frequency of tourist,

Table 4 shows that a majority of respondents in Madaba, cultural exchange achieved a mean score of 3.48, as the majority of respondents 62.8% agreed and 27.25% disagreed achieving a positively high mean score of 3.48. The findings of this study concerning the influence of tourism on improving cultural exchange are consistent with the findings of Liu and Var (1986). 33.2% of respondents agreed against 46.85% who disagreed that their quality of life improved as a result of tourism achieving a moderate mean score of 2.71. The overall mean score for positive social impact variables in Madaba was positively moderate (3.10).

As to the cultural exchange, tourism affects local people positively as they communicate with foreign tourists who have their distinct culture and norms of live. The exchange between the local people and tourists form so many cultural backgrounds is believed to improve the experience of the local people as they communicate with foreign tourists. When the Muslim tourist comes from Islamic countries especially from Southeast Asia and meets with the local residents, this will generate cultural exchange and benefits between them with regard to religion, languages, morality and traditions.

Referring to the quality of life, the tourism industry is found to affect the quality of life moderately. This is due to the fact that the local people who are engaged with business activities associated with tourism will increase their sales and their incomes. Communicating with tourists who already have high purchasing power that enable those to go for tourism and spend money of their traveling will encourage the local people to spend the extra income they got from tourism in enhancing the quality of life. Furthermore, the Jordanian Government insists on developing the areas of attractions for tourists by enhancing the infrastructures such as the high-ways, the telephone services, the electricity and water supply, and other services that could reflect not only in tourists satisfaction, but could also lead to enhancing the

quality of life of the local people in the areas of attractions.

### Negative impact

The eight items concerning the negative social impact of tourism development are investigated to measure the perceptions of local people to various social issues—difficulties of life, crime, alcoholism, drugs, prostitution, impact on general morality, on locals' honesty, and increasing tension between locals and tourists. From these eight items, the first six variables were chosen to stand for the negative social impact, as shown in Table 5.

It can be seen from Table 5 that 46.2% of respondents in the region did not agree against a minority of 27.3% that local residents suffer from difficulties because of living in a tourist area. The mean score for this variable for all regions was, hence, negatively moderate (2.77).

The majority (63.4%) of respondents had 63.4% who disagreed and 18.1% who agreed about the same issue obtaining a low mean score of 2.33, while the findings of this study concerning the negative influence of tourism on the generation of crime are consistent with the findings of Liu and Var (1986), Teo (1994), and Al-Khalidi (2003).

Survey results on the variable of alcoholism as can be derived from Table 5 reveal that the majority of the respondents (71.0%) combined agreed that tourism had an impact on the spread of alcoholism, while 20.6% disagreed, obtaining a negatively high mean score of 3.62. The finding of this study concerning the spread of alcoholism is consistence with the finding of King, Pizam and Milman (1993).

As it can be seen in Table 5, the majority of the respondents (39.9%) of respondents in Madaba disagreed against 31.9% who agreed about the relationship above obtaining a negatively moderate mean score of 2.83. The findings of this study concerning the negative influence of tourism on the spread of drugs are consistent with the findings of Liu and Var (1986).

**Table 5. Residents' perceptions towards negative social impacts of tourism**

| Variables in Madaba  | Agree |      | Neutral |      | Disagree |      | Mean        | Std. Dev.   | Level           |
|----------------------|-------|------|---------|------|----------|------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
|                      | Freq. | %    | Freq.   | %    | Freq.    | %    |             |             |                 |
| Difficulties of life | 65    | 27.3 | 63      | 26.5 | 110      | 46.2 | 2.77        | 1.03        | Moderate        |
| Crime                | 43    | 18.1 | 44      | 18.5 | 151      | 63.4 | 2.33        | 1.16        | Low             |
| Alcoholism           | 169   | 71.0 | 20      | 8.4  | 49       | 20.6 | 3.62        | 1.09        | High            |
| Drugs                | 76    | 31.9 | 67      | 28.2 | 95       | 39.9 | 2.83        | 1.21        | Moderate        |
| Prostitution         | 142   | 59.7 | 53      | 22.3 | 23       | 18.0 | 3.50        | 1.04        | High            |
| Morality             | 89    | 37.2 | 50      | 20.9 | 99       | 41.7 | 3.01        | 0.92        | Moderate        |
| <b>Grand mean</b>    |       |      |         |      |          |      | <b>3.01</b> | <b>0.77</b> | <b>Moderate</b> |



The development of tourism in Jordan has played an undeniable role in enriching the cultural education of the Jordanian people, by bringing together different cultures, especially in such cultural functions as the annual Jordan International Festival and international sports events and conferences. The festival of Jordan is very important; it attracts a huge number of tourists and bringing a lot of money to Jordan. However, at the same time, the benefits have been enjoyed by commercial tourism operators such as hotels, agency, and restaurants in Amman, but only a small number of local residents do benefits from such financial benefits. Therefore, this situation results to a negative impact on sustainability of tourism and on the life style of local residents. Finally, the creation of resentment from tourism and tourists, then the numbers of tourists visiting the tourist site will decrease.

Jordan Tourism Investments is a Jordanian company which has restarted the traditional village of Taybeh, in Jordan, into a cultural tourist resort, with the help and agreement of the local residents. With many of the younger generation moving to the cities, the village was losing its nature. By restoring its 19th century buildings and reviving old crafts, the village is now flourishing again. The village lies 9 km south east of the historic city of Petra. It was established in July 1994, the village now accommodates around 60,000 guests each year (MOTA, 2000). From this project there are many positive impacts on the local residents such as: generation of new jobs, restoration of the old building, restoration of the old tradition like villages dances, renovation the environment, such as plantation of new trees like olive and fig trees.

On other side, tourism in Jordan can play a significant role to bring negative impacts on the tourism sites. The rise in prices and the misconducts of some tourists, especially in peak seasons big events, creates difficulties for locals because most of the tourists came from difference countries, culture and values, therefore when the tourist come in to contact with local residents in Jordan, that will results

to some positive and negative impact such as learning of language, cultural education. However, at the same time there are many potential negative impacts from this movement, such as the dress of tourists which is very different from the dress of local residents especially for women, thus the local residents will start to imitate the tourists.

The levels of crime and drugs abuse in Jordan have generally remained very low, whereas the levels of alcoholism and prostitution have risen especially after 1990, when thousands of people from Iraq and the Arab Gulf started immigrate in Jordan to settle, to work, to cross to other nearby countries or for visit purposes.

Crime is generally not a serious problem for tourists in Jordan, but little crime is prevalent in the downtown Amman area and close to the Roman Theatre. In the narrow roads of the Old City, crowded conditions invite pickpockets and other petty criminals. It is more safety to travel in groups when visiting the center of Amman, most of such crimes were committed by unemployed males and by low-paid laborers between the ages of 18-27 (International Travel, 2005). The overall effect of such misconducts, mentioned above has not touched the personal codes of morality of all Jordanian people. However, in situations of direct contact with foreigners especially for youth are vulnerable to the imitation of this foreign culture.

### Positive impacts

The four items concerning the positive social impacts are investigated to measure the perceptions of local people to various social issues—positive change in the traditional culture, encouragement of a variety of cultural activities, improvement in the quality of life, and upgrading of recreational facilities. From these four items, two variables were later chosen to stand for positive social impact cultural exchange and quality of life, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. Residents' perceptions towards positive social impacts of tourism**

| Variables in Madaba | Agree |      | Neutral |      | Disagree |      | Mean        | Std. Dev.   | Level           |
|---------------------|-------|------|---------|------|----------|------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
|                     | Freq. | %    | Freq.   | %    | Freq.    | %    |             |             |                 |
| Cultural exchange   | 150   | 62.8 | 23      | 9.8  | 65       | 27.2 | 3.48        | 0.96        | High            |
| Quality of life     | 79    | 33.2 | 47      | 19.9 | 112      | 46.8 | 2.71        | 0.96        | Moderate        |
| <b>Grand mean</b>   |       |      |         |      |          |      | <b>3.10</b> | <b>0.75</b> | <b>Moderate</b> |

The results are optimistic in its nature, and that can be explained by the supportive decisions of the local government in the last few years which carry the possibilities to enhance the role of tourism in the local people's life. These decisions include the implementation of investment law to encourage the foreign investment in tourism, and reducing the costs and tax associated with tourism as explained above.

### Negative impact

Despite the positive impact of the tourist sector on economic development in Jordan, there are some negative impacts associated with tourism. The result of these findings had shown that tourism has some negative economic impacts.

The three items that investigated the negative economic impact of tourism in general are: (1) It increases in the prices for goods and services, (2) tourism only benefits a small group of people, and (3) the high expenditure by tourists has an undesirable effect on the way of the life of the people in the regions. Standard of living of the people is meant to measure the perceptions of local people to various economic issues. Then, from the three items, only the variable (increase in prices) was chosen to represent economic negative impacts, as Table 3 shows.

As Table 3 demonstrates, 53.4% of respondents the three regions agreed that the prices of goods and services in their region had increased as a result of tourism, while 29.1% of respondents did not agree that prices had actually increased. The rest of respondents (17.5%) expressed a neutral opinion. In all, the mean score of the negative economic impact of tourism for this variable indicates a negatively moderate level of 3.35. In general, living standard for Jordanians did not much improve with the growth of tourism in the country, unlike what has been noticeable in some other countries, like Cyprus (Akis *et al.*, 1996).

These results can be explained from an economic point of view. The prices are expected to increase because tourism reflects itself on the people's life. The tourists themselves carrying out their travel and they their intentions to spend on

their tourism activities, especially as they are coming from foreign countries and their living standards are much more higher than Jordan, and due to the difference in the exchange rate, tourism still perceived the Jordanian products and service lower than the prices in their original countries. The local people will invest this opportunity to increase the prices of their products and services, and thus the income of the local people is expected to increase. This will enhance the purchasing power of the local people, and this adjustment in the prices will be of benefit for them by leveraging their life style. This will affect negatively the local people who are not engaged in business associated with tourism, as they will suffer from the increasing prices while their income remains unchanged.

### Social impact

Tourism contributes to social ills such as begging, gambling, drug trafficking, and prostitution, as well as the uprooting of traditional society, and causes the deterioration of the traditional culture and customs of host countries (Var and Kim, 1990). Interactions between residents and tourists can impact creative expression by providing new opportunities (positive) or by stifling individuality with new restrictions (negative). Increased tourism can push a community to adopt a different moral conduct such as improved understanding between nations (positive) or increased illicit drug use (negative). Tourism contributes to an undesirable increase in the consumption of alcohol, (King, Pizam and Milman, 1993).

Safety and health facilities and staffing tend to increase at the same time safety problems such as crime and accidents increase (Lankford and Howard, 1994; Liu and Var, 1986). Tourism can improve the quality of life in an area by increasing the number of attractions, recreational opportunities, and services (Pizam, 1978). Tourism offers residents' opportunities to meet interesting people, make friendships, learn about the world, and expose themselves to new perspectives (Mathieson and Wall, 1982).

**Table 3. Residents' perceptions towards negative economic impacts of tourism**

| Variables in Madaba | Agree |      | Neutral |      | Disagree |      | Mean          | Std. Dev.    | Level           |
|---------------------|-------|------|---------|------|----------|------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
|                     | Freq. | %    | Freq.   | %    | Freq.    | %    |               |              |                 |
| Price increase      | 128   | 53.4 | 41      | 17.5 | 69       | 29.1 | 3.3543        | 0.641        | Moderate        |
| <b>Grand mean</b>   |       |      |         |      |          |      | <b>3.3543</b> | <b>0.641</b> | <b>Moderate</b> |

The questionnaire is structured around a type of scale like the Likert scale. The Likert scale is most common because it is easy for the researcher to construct and administer and it is suitable for the respondent to understand. Likert scale is also commonly used in marketing research (Grover and Vriens, 2006). The questionnaire consisted of three sections—namely, positive impacts of tourism, negative impacts of tourism, and respondents' profile. The items for community perceptions toward tourism impacts were taken from these studies (Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Haralambopoulos and Pizam, 1996; Lankford and Howard, 1994; Liu and Var, 1986; Milman and Pizam, 1988; Perdue, Long and Allen, 1987; Pizam, 1978). The questionnaire was distributed in two zones around each of the three research sites: the first zone was the one closer to the sites (within 3 km), and the second was in the suburbs of the sites (above 3 km). Based on information provided directly by the host population, the study by Belisle and Hoy (1980) in Santa Marta, Colombia, found that attitudes of local people vary according to the distance of their residence from the tourist site and to the density of tourist presence in their residence areas.

## Results and Findings

### Residents attitude

The first 15 items in the resident perception questionnaire measure the positive perceptions of local people to various economic, social and environmental issues, such as investment, changes in the living standard, income, employment opportunities, recreational facilities for residents, tourism as a source for valuable experience, and preservation of antiquities and public facilities. The second group, of 17 items, measures the negative economic, social and environmental impacts in relation to such matters as price increase, benefits to small groups of people in the region, cultural damage, damage in the quality of life, crime, pollution, noise and traffic congestion.

### Positive impact

The seven items concerning the positive economic impact are investigated to measure the perceptions of local people to various economic issues, such as investment, living standard, income, employment opportunities, vital industry, and foreign exchange. From seven items, the data analysis came up with four items that represent positive economic impact—investment, employment, income and foreign exchange—as shown in Table 2.

As can be seen from Table 2, the positive economic impact in Madaba came at a moderately positive level. Investment, with a mean score of 2.80, got the agreement of 45.35% of local respondents and the disagreement of 43.5%. As for employment, it got 46.2% agreement and 37.0% disagreement with a mean score of 3.07, while 32% agreed and 45.26% disagreed for "Income and standard of living" with a moderate mean score 2.74. Foreign exchange had a high mean score of 3.68, with 65.1% of locals who agreed and 13.0% who disagreed. In general, the grand mean for all economic tourism impact variables in Madaba depicted a positively moderate level of 3.0. The finding of this study concerning the employment is consistent with the finding of Lankford and Howard (1994) and Akis *et al.* (1996).

These results can be explained by the nature of tourism industry in Jordan. The tourism industry in Jordan started to recover after the crises that hit the country during the wars between Israel and the Arab countries, the Gulf War and financial crisis which believed to affect the investment; as the economy of Jordan suffered from the instability. However, the trend of these results showed that Jordan economy has started its recovery and carry the possibilities of developing the tourism industry. This can be supported from the mean scores of foreign exchange which is high, while the mean scores of employment, investment, and standards of life are all moderate.

Table 2. Residents' perceptions towards positive economic impacts of tourism

| Variables in Madaba | Agree |      | Neutral |      | Disagree |      | Mean         | Std. Dev.   | Level           |
|---------------------|-------|------|---------|------|----------|------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
|                     | Freq. | %    | Freq.   | %    | Freq.    | %    |              |             |                 |
| Investment          | 108   | 5.3  | 26      | 11.1 | 104      | 43.5 | 2.80         | 0.95        | Moderate        |
| Employment          | 110   | 6.2  | 40      | 16.8 | 88       | 37.0 | 3.07         | 1.12        | Moderate        |
| Living standard     | 76    | 32   | 52      | 21.9 | 110      | 45.2 | 2.74         | 0.88        | Moderate        |
| Foreign exchange    | 155   | 65.1 | 52      | 21.8 | 31       | 13.0 | 3.68         | 0.92        | High            |
| <b>Grand mean</b>   |       |      |         |      |          |      | <b>3.004</b> | <b>0.72</b> | <b>Moderate</b> |

sector provides employment to over 40,092 people. In the recent past, the sector approximately provided up to 32,434 employment opportunities in 2007 and 37,966 in 2008 respectively. The hotels industry employed around 46% of the total number of workers, while restaurants employed 25% people of the total work force, whereas the rest are employed in the other sector (MOTA, 2009).

### Madaba

Madaba of the Bible and of Moabite texts is today the small town of Madaba, only 30 km south of Amman (Fig. 1) and covering around 993,550 km<sup>2</sup> representing around 2.2% from Jordan. The town is the administrative center for the Jordanian territory south of Amman.

Madaba is 800 m above sea level, lying on 31° 43' longitude and 23° 48' latitude (Royal Geographic Centre, 2001). The governorate is surrounded by Balqa from the north, the Dead Sea from the west, Amman from the east, and Kerak from the south. It has a population of 132,140 representing around 2.5% of Jordan's population, 59% of them in urban areas and 41% in rural areas (Royal Geographic Centre, 2001).

According to the statistics of the MOTA (2009), the total number of visitors to the tourist and archeological sites in Madaba governorate during

2009 reached 304,000, compared with 33,000 in 2008. French tourists, 46,000, topped the list of foreign visitors to the city in 2009, followed by 37,000 tourists from Spain, Italy around 36,000, Germany 29,000, and about 11,000 from Switzerland.

Roman roads and civic architecture can still be seen in the center of the modern town. In addition, there are other mosaic floors preserved throughout the town, as well as a fine local museum. Ever since the Mosaic Map of Madaba was discovered in 1896, the attention of scholars worldwide was drawn upon the "City of Mosaics" in Jordan. At the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George, visitors may view the earliest surviving original map of the Holy Land, which was made around A.D. 560.

### Methodology

279 questionnaires were returned, 41 of them deemed unusable for analysis, while 21 questionnaires were not returned by the respondents. Finally, a total of 238 questionnaires were found suitable for analysis.

Data for this study are drawn from a questionnaire survey conducted in the year of 2009 at the region of Madaba in Jordan. A total of 279 samples were obtained from the random sampling of residents of Madaba.

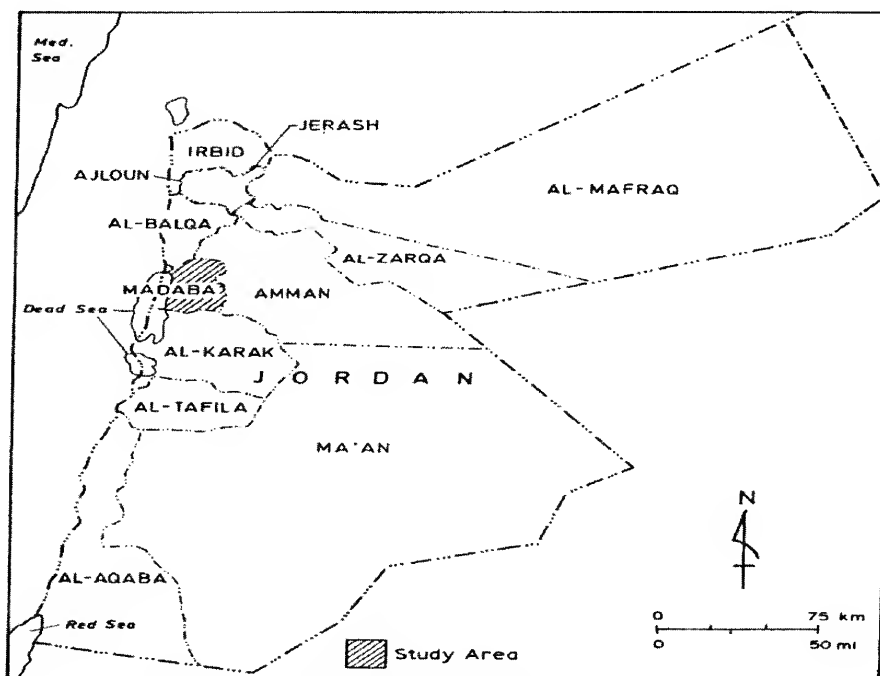


Fig. 1. Map of the study area.

**Table 1. The major impacts of tourism**

|  |
|--|
| <b>Positive Economic Impacts</b>   |
| (1) Provides employment opportunities, (2) generates supply of foreign exchange, (3) increases income, (4) increases gross national products, (5) improves an infrastructure, facilities and services (sewage system), (6) raises government revenue (tax), and (7) diversifies the economy.   |
| <b>Negative Economic Impacts</b>   |
| (1) Causes inflation of land value, (2) increases demand for local products, raising price on food and other products, (3) diverts funds from other economic development projects, (4) creates leakage through demand for imports, (5) results in seasonal employment, (6) displaces traditional patterns of labor, and (7) involves costs of providing the construction and maintenance of infrastructure.  |
| <b>Positive Social and Cultural Impacts</b>  |
| (1) Creates favorite image of the country, (2) provides recreational facilities for residents as well as tourists, (3) facilitates the process of modernization, (4) provides education opportunities, (5) encourages pride in local arts, crafts, and cultural expressions, and (6) preserves cultural heritage.  |
| <b>Negative Social and Cultural Impacts</b>  |
| (1) Creates resentment and antagonism related to dramatic differences in wealth, (2) causes overcrowding, congestion, traffic jams, (3) invites moral degradation resulting in increased crime, prostitution, drug trafficking, (4) causes conflicts in traditional societies and in values, (5) creates demonstration effect whereby natives imitate tourists and relinquish cultural traditions, and (6) encourages the tranquilization of crafts. |
| <b>Positive Environmental Impacts</b>  |
| (1) Justifies environmental protection (marine reserve) and improvement, (2) protects wildlife, and (3) encourages education of value of natural based tourism.  |
| <b>Negative Environmental Impacts</b>  |
| (1) Fosters water pollution, air pollution and solid waste, (2) tramples delicate soil and beaches, (3) destroys coral and coastal dunes, and (4) disrupts flora and fauna (wildlife, plant life wetlands).  |

### Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate residents' attitudes toward the positive and negative impacts of tourism activities on economic, social and environment of local people in the region of Madaba in Jordan.

### Tourism Development in Jordan

Jordan lies in south-west Asia, in the area known as the Middle East, at 31 N, 36 E. Jordan is surrounded by four countries: with Iraq in the east (181 km border), Palestine in the west (politically differentiated as Israel, 238 km border; and the West Bank, 97 km border), Saudi Arabia in the south (728 km border), and Syria in the north (375 km border); and it has an outlet to an arm of the Red Sea at Aqaba in the southwest. The total area of Jordan is about 90,000 km<sup>2</sup>, of which no less than 80% is steppe and desert. Jordan's location at the heart of this vital area has served the country in many issues related to tourism (Al-Rousan *et al.*, 2001).

In Jordan tourism has played a great role in attracting investment, especially in the hotel industry. The government of Jordan renewed its investment laws with the aim of creating a friendly environment for foreign investors. The Investment Promotion Law, for example, encourages the exemptions of taxes and customs duties for foreign goods and investments. The law also reduces the taxes to be paid by foreign

investors from 25-75% depending on the type of activity, project type, and the classification of the zone the project is to be located (Arab World Online, 2000).

Tourism is one of the most important sectors in Jordan's economy. In 2009, 3.5 million tourists from various countries visited Jordan, with tourist receipts amounting to about 3 billion dollars.

Its major tourist attractions include visiting historical sites, like the worldwide famous Petra (UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1985, and one of New Seven Wonders of the world, the Jordan River, Mount Nebo, Madaba, numerous medieval mosques and churches, and unspoilt natural locations as Wadi Rum and Jordan's northern mountainous region in general), as well as observing cultural and religious sites and traditions.

Jordan also offers eco-tourism, which is focused in the Dead Sea area, education tourism, hiking, scuba diving in Aqaba's, in coral reefs, pop-culture tourism and shopping tourism in Jordan's cities. More than half of the approximate 4.8 Arab tourists in 2009, mainly from the Arabian Gulf, said they plan to spend their holidays in Jordan.

According to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities 2009, the sector of tourism which contributes nearly 14% to the country's GDP annually has so far generated revenues of \$1.2 billion in the first six months of the year, up 2% from the same period a year earlier.

The tourism sector in Jordan is a labor-intensive industry, in the year 2009, the tourism

According to Cooper *et al.* (1993), there are different factors affecting the attitude of residents towards tourism at both domestic and international levels. These factors includes, age, education, income level, and socio-economic background.

Tourism was positive first because of its economic impacts. Tourism is an engine for generating a range of new private and public income opportunities. The most immediate and direct benefit of tourism development is the creation of jobs and the opportunity for people to increase their income and standard of living in local communities. Hence, local communities turn to tourism as a mean of raising income, increase employment and living standards (Akis *et al.*, 1996). These impacts are observable as tourists contact with the local environment, economy, social, and community. Hence, it is suitable to consider the impacts of tourism under the headings of economic, environmental and social impacts. The impacts of tourism can either be positive and beneficial, or negative and detrimental to the local community. The economic impacts of tourism are the most widely researched impacts of tourism on community (Mason, 2003). Economic impacts are easier to research in a local community because it is small and generally easier to assess. Tourism can have positive economic effects on local economies, and a visible impact on national GDP growth. It can be also an essential component for both community development and poverty alleviation (Ashe, 2005). The economic impacts of tourism are, therefore, generally perceived positively by the residents (Tatoglu *et al.*, 2000).

The environment is being increasingly recognized as a key element in tourism (Liu *et al.*, 1987). Many community attractions and tourism offerings have a reliance on the natural and man-made resources (Starr, 2002). The environmental impacts of tourism on community can take the form of both the quality of the physical environment and access to these resources in which positive environmental impacts of tourism on a community (Liu *et al.*, 1987; Mason, 2003). Tourism provides a reason to preserve the natural scenery and man-made historic sites, traditional towns and neighborhoods, villages, lighthouses, harbors and fishing piers (Cohen, 1978). Conversely, negative environmental impacts which are frequently highlighted include littering, overcrowding, traffic congestion as well as pollution of water and soil along with the deterioration of natural resources as a result of the constructions of tourism services, such as erections of hotels (Liu *et al.*, 1987; Mason, 2003).

According to Sofield (1991), the socio-cultural impacts of tourism can be defined as the sum total of all the social and cultural influences that come to bear upon

the host society as a result of tourist contact. International tourism has perhaps become a major source of inter-cultural contact in the modern world (Dogan, 1989). In recent years, there have been increases in indoor and outdoor tourism for experiencing another culture (Besculides *et al.*, 2002). Cultural tourism includes visiting historic or archaeological sites, being involved in community festivals, watching traditional dances or ceremonies, or merely shopping for handcrafted art (Besculides *et al.*, 2002).

Different perceptions from different residents can provide insight into the nature and degree of tourism impacts towards the respective tourist destination. The community perceptions on tourism impacts are likely to be an important planning for successful community development (Ko and Stewart, 2002) (see Table 1).

There are many studies in recent years that have examined host residents' perceptions of the impact of tourism towards their community. Many local communities recognize that tourism can stimulate change in social, cultural, environmental and economic dimensions, where tourism activities have had a close connection with the local communities (Beeton, 2006; Richards and Hall, 2000). Understanding and assessing tourism impacts in local communities is important in order to maintain sustainability and long-term success of the tourism industry (Diedrich and García-Buades, 2009). A major reason for rising interest in the area has been the evidence that tourism leads not only to be positive, but also has the potential for negative, outcomes at the local level (Lankford and Howard, 1994). It is generally felt that community perceptions toward tourism impacts are likely to be an important planning and policy consideration for successful tourism development (Ap, 1992). Many studies on community residents' perceptions of tourism impacts have been conducted (Aref *et al.*, 2009; Kala, 2008; Bestard and Nadal, 2007; Walpole and Goodwin, 2001; Andereck *et al.*, 2005; Ap, 1990, 1992; Ap and Crompton, 1993; Brown and Giles, 1994; Choi and Sirakaya, 2005; Johanson *et al.*, 1994; Liu *et al.*, 1987; Liu and Var, 1986; Pizam, 1978; Ritchie, 1993; Robson and Robson, 1996; Ryan and Montgomery, 1994; Seid, 1994; Sheldon and Abenoja, 2001; Sheldon and Var, 1984; Sirakaya *et al.*, 2001; Teye *et al.*, 2002; Upchurch and Teivane, 2000). All these studies are performed by Western researchers. Thus, the relevance of the findings in the Iranian context may not be fitting. To date, few attempts of research have examined residents' perceived impacts of tourism towards the local communities in Iran (Zamani-Farahani and Musa, 2008). Hence, the purpose of this study is to examine community perceptions towards economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism.

## **Religious Tourism in Jordan: A Study of Residents' Perception Towards Its Impacts in Madaba**

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(Received 5/2/1432H.; accepted for publication 27/3/1432H.)

**Keywords:** Tourism, Positive impact, Negative impact, Heritage tourism.

**Abstract.** The topic of residents' attitudes towards tourism development has been analyzed by many authors, but there have been few studies that have focuses on impacts of religious tourism. The Madaba residents look at tourism development with a promising future to bring more income and new jobs to the area. Investors search to find new attractive business and middle and low classes in the community look to find better investment. The main objectives of the study are to determine the residents' attitudes to the positive and negative impacts of religious tourism activities on economic, social, and environment of Madaba local residents. After a comprehensive review of the literature on the role of tourism development, a total of 238 questionnaires were obtained from a random sampling of residents of Madaba. The study shows that most of the residents have moderate perceptions towards economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism. The paper uses the findings to suggest critical implications that local governments need to consider when planning tourism development.

### **Introduction**

Tourism is a major aspect of worldwide economy, in all countries, whether developed or developing, having increasing opportunities to participate as hosts and guests, in this socio-economic phenomenon. Tourism is often referred to as the world's largest industry and regarded as a means of achieving community development (Sharpley, 2002). According to the World Tourism Organization (2009), tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries and one of the global engines of development.

The term "tourism impact" has been gaining increasing attention in the tourism literature. A number of studies in recent years have examined host residents' perception of the impact of tourism development on their community, an issue that continues to be important. A major reason for the rising interest in studying tourism has been the increasing evidence that tourism development leads not only to positive, but also has the potential for negative, outcomes at the local level (Lankford and Howard, 1994; Gunn, 2002). Liu and Var (1986) note that tourism development is usually justified based on economic benefits, and is challenged on

the grounds of social, cultural, or environmental destruction. In addition, the economic benefits traditionally associated with tourism development are now being measured against its potential for social disturbance (Cook, 1982). Huang and Stewart (1996) indicate that tourism development may change residents' relationships to one another and to their community. It is generally felt that the perceptions and attitudes of residents towards the impacts of tourism are likely to be an important planning and policy consideration for successful development, marketing, and operation of existing and future tourism programs (Ap, 1992).

Residents' attitudes towards tourism, and more specifically their perceptions of tourism impact, have been a subject of research for more than 30 years (Andereck and Vogt, 2000). Jafari (1986) notes that tourism research in the 1960s focused on the positive aspects of tourism impact, then in the 1970s on the negative aspects; but achieved a more balanced and systematic approach in the 1980s. The study of residents' attitudes towards tourism has often been conducted in rural communities, as many of these places struggle with economic viability (Andereck and Vogt, 2000).